ſame kind of common matter in all circumſtances; but a ſolid foot, for inſtance, of one kind of common matter, may contain more of the electric fluid than a ſolid foot of ſome other kind of common matter; and a pound weight of the ſame kind of common matter may, when in a rarer ſtate, contain more of the electric fluid than when in a denſer ſtate.

For the electric fluid, being attracted by any portion of common matter, the parts of that fluid (which have among themſelves a mutual repulſion) are brought ſo near to each other by the attraction of the common matter that abſorbs them, as that their repulſion is equal to the condenſing power of attraction in common matter; and then ſuch portion of common matter will abſorb no more.

Bodies of different kinds having thus attracted and abſorb'd what I call their *natural quantity*, *i. e.* juſt as much of the electric fluid as is ſuited to their circumſtances of denſity, rarity, and power of attracting, do not then ſhow any ſigns of electricity among each other.

And if more electric fluid be added to one of theſe bodies, it does not enter, but ſpreads on the ſurface, forming an atmoſphere; and then ſuch body ſhows ſigns of electricity.

I have in a former paper compar'd common matter to a ſponge, and the electric fluid to water: I beg leave once more to make uſe of the ſame compariſon, to illuſtrate farther my meaning in this particular.

When a ſponge is ſomewhat condens'd by being ſqueezed between the fingers, it will not receive and retain ſo much water as when in its more looſe and open ſtate.

If *more* ſqueez'd and condens'd, ſome of the water will come out of its inner parts, and flow on the ſurface.

If the preſſure of the fingers be intirely removed, the ſponge will not only reſume what was lately forced out, but attract an additional quantity.

As the ſponge in its rarer ſtate will *naturally* attract and abſorb *more* water, and in its denſer ſtate will *naturally* attract and abſorb *leſs* water; we may call the quantity it attracts and abſorbs in either ſtate, its *natural quantity*, the ſtate being conſidered.

Now what the ſponge is to water, the ſame is water to the electric fluid.

When a portion of water is in its common denſe ſtate, it can hold no more electric fluid than it has; if any be added, it ſpreads on the ſurface.

When the ſame portion of water is rarify'd into vapour, and forms a cloud, it is then capable of receiving and abſorbing a much greater quantity; there is room for each particle to have an electric atmoſphere.

Thus water, in its rarify'd ſtate, or in the form of a cloud, will be in a negative ſtate of electricity; it will have leſs than its *natural quantity*; that is, leſs than it is naturally capable of attracting and abſorbing in that ſtate.

Such a cloud, then, coming ſo near the earth as to be within the ſtriking diſtance, will receive from the earth a

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